

In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Volume 2, Issue 18, August 29, 2003

Inside this issue:

Message from the Mayor	1
Tavis Smiley Foundation Youth Summit	2
Community Profile	2
Community Forum 3 on Nonviolence and Remembrance of Transgendered Teens	3
Bass Fishing Tournament Benefits D.C. Charities	3
Mayor's Week in Review	4
District Activities	4
Community News	4
Upcoming Events	5

EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF THE MAYOR
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Penn. Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 727-2980
Fax: (202) 727-6561
<http://dc.gov>

Message from the Mayor

As our students and teachers in the District of Columbia prepare to return to school, let me take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and productive school year. These are challenging times for our city and our schools, but with hard work and dedication on all parts, we will continue to make progress. Best of all, I feel we're moving in the right direction.

On August 14, I visited American University in Northwest to address a group of 45 new teachers who are members of the Teach for America D.C. team. These young, enthusiastic teachers are prepared to begin teaching in the D.C. Public Schools and a small number of public charter schools next year. Their dedication to our city and our students' education is inspiring.

Teach For America is the national corps of outstanding recent college graduates who commit two years to teach in urban and rural public schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to expand educational opportunity for all children. Over the past 11 years, Teach For America D.C. has placed more than 520 teachers in the D.C. Public Schools, reaching over 44,000 students in under-resourced communities across the city.

More than 300 Teach For America alumni live and work in the D.C. area. Last year, 127 Teach For America D.C. corps members met critical needs in 57 schools in every ward of the city. The primary goal for each of these teachers is to achieve significant gains in student achievement with their students.

I am excited about what our young people will learn through these teachers' innovative approaches to teaching. I hope that after their two years is up the teachers will decide to continue their career in teaching here in the District.

My vision for public education in the District is one where every young person will come to school ready to learn, and leave with the necessary skills to be successful in today's technologically advanced society. Also, they will be taught to be responsible citizens and to make valuable contributions to their local and global worlds. And finally, they will have access to adequate social services to support their learning. Teachers are a vital part of realizing this vision.

Of the 11 finalists in the D.C. Public Schools First Class Teacher Award, which recognizes outstanding first year teachers in the District, five were Teach For America DC members. They are: Erin Campbell of Stanton Elementary School in Ward 8, Omar Garriott of Fletcher-Johnson Educational Center in Ward 7, Natasha Robinson of Wilkinson Elementary in Ward 8, Natalie Webb of Cardozo Senior High School in Ward 1, and Christina Williams of MacFarland Middle School.

Since we don't want to lose any of our best teachers, my administration has implemented incentives, such as homebuyers' assistance, to attract teachers to this area. Improving our District of Columbia Public Schools is a collective effort – and I'm grateful for the work that TFA is doing every day.

And to the students reading this...sharpen your pencils and get ready to work hard!

For more information about Teach For America, visit: www.teachforamerica.org/.



AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

Tavis Smiley Foundation Youth Summit

On August 8, I attended an inspiring youth summit—the Tavis Smiley Foundation Youth to Leaders National Summit—at Catholic University.

The conference theme, “Redefining the Image: Preparing African American Youth for Leadership,” was selected by the 20 youth members of the summit planning committee as reflective of the goals of the summit. Those goals include developing the national agenda for African American youth issues, creating a network of leaders, and establishing parental and adult support.

More than 650 teens from 29 states, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands and the Island of Barbados met to set a national agenda for youth concerns. The youth spent five days on the campus of Catholic University in workshops and planning sessions learning about accessing media, grassroots organizing, financing, time management, setting goals and building positive relationships. Then, using the skills learned in strategy sessions, they devised a platform of issues they view as critical for youth success. While here in Washington, the youth each donated a book to local elementary school students.

Tavis Smiley is the host of the Tavis Smiley Show on National Public Radio, and the author of six books. His most recent book is “Keeping the Faith: Stories of Love, Courage, Healing and Hope from Black America.” The Tavis Smiley Foundation is a nonprofit organization founded in 1999 to enlighten, encourage, and empower youth to improve their lives, their community and the world.

Here in the District, we’ve established the D.C. Youth Advisory Council, which gives young people the opportunity to have a voice in District government. Young people advise me on various issues—from education, to “what’s in style.” It’s my goal to make the District a better place for all residents—especially our youth.

Community Profile

Felicity Loomer

Felicity Loomer is not your typical 21-year-old college student. For the past two years, she has volunteered at local elementary schools, enriching students’ reading, writing, and creativity skills. As an AmeriCorps member with Heads Up, she spends time doing what she loves most: volunteering to work with kids.

Felicity is a senior English major at Catholic University, where she has participated in numerous homeless outreach projects and tutored with D.C. Reads. In the summer of 2002, she volunteered full time through Heads Up at Brookland Elementary School.

Founded in 1996, Heads Up is a nonprofit organization that runs a year-round series of after-school, mentoring, and summer programs for families in Washington, D.C. by enlisting college students and parents as tutors, teachers, mentors, and coaches. Heads Up also helps college students understand their social responsibilities and trains them in the leadership skills to carry them out.

Felicity continued her service with Heads Up during the school year as a part-time AmeriCorps member, working in an after-school program to increase literacy rates and to “make a difference” in kids’ lives. This summer her work continues with fifth graders at Plummer Elementary School in Ward 7.

“They have a lot of energy,” Felicity said. “But even if you can’t see it, you are making a difference in the lives of the kids.”

She said the most challenging part of being a Heads Up AmeriCorps member is getting the students to focus and enjoy education. Part of the curriculum she created for her students this summer included a photography club. She brought disposable cameras into the classroom and asked the students to go out and take pictures of the world around them.

Every year, approximately 250 college students from every university in the area volunteer with Heads Up. More than 600 first-through-sixth graders from six D.C. public schools are expected to participate in Heads Up during the 2003-2004 academic year. To learn more, visit www.headsup-dc.org.

Felicity was the April youth winner of the Mayor’s Community Service Award, sponsored by the D.C. Commission on National and Community Service. If you would like to nominate a youth or adult for the monthly award, visit www.cnscs.dc.gov for nomination information or call (202) 727-9461.



Felicity Loomer



Community Forum on Nonviolence and Remembrance of Transgendered Teens

On August 12, I joined our city's public safety officials and scores of citizens for a community forum on nonviolence at the new Regional Operations Command Center on Georgia Avenue in Ward 4—commonly referred to as "ROC North." On the same night, I attended a memorial ceremony for two transgendered teens slain last year.

Councilmember Adrian Fenty (Ward 4) organized the community meeting to discuss ways to curb violence in city neighborhoods. Attendees included Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Chief Charles Ramsey and other MPD officials; Orrin Howard and Shauna Spencer from the D.C. Department of Mental Health; Dennis Butler from the D.C. Department of Public Works Graffiti Removal Unit; and members of the MPD's Gang Intervention Task Force.

As a group, we discussed some of the concerns local residents have about public safety in their area—in particular a recent increase in gang activity. The lives of too many young people have been cut short by gang violence. Innocent people—uninvolved in gang activity—have become victims as well. Many people are scared to walk the streets in their own neighborhoods. And some of these young people are caught up in the dangerous and violent world of street gangs.

As Mayor, I know that people of all ages and backgrounds come to the District for opportunity. No one knows this better than I do—I talk about it all the time. There is opportunity here, and our city is growing like never before.

Unfortunately, many of our young people do not have the chance to take advantage of these opportunities—they don't get jobs and they don't finish school. These young people never have the chance to continue their education or thrive in a city that is one of the best places to live in the country.

In August 2002, two transgendered teens were slain. The community came together on August 12 in Southeast to remember Wilbur "Stephanie" Thomas and Deon "Ukea" Davis. It was a poignant reminder that—as far as we have come—we still have much to do to make our city safer.

MPD Chief Ramsey and the U.S. Attorney's office have assured me that they are doing everything possible to resolve this case. Chief Ramsey has increased the reward for information leading to a conviction in any of the city's unsolved murder cases to \$25,000.

I applaud and support him in his efforts, but I also know there is more we can do, and more the community can do, when we work together in partnership to solve these crimes. MPD made excellent progress in the early stages of the investigation of this double homicide, but the Department still needs more information to close the case for prosecution. Anyone with information—even if it seems minor or insignificant—is asked to call the MPD at 727-9099.

Bass Fishing Tournament Benefits D.C. Charities

On August 7, I joined a group of folks catching bass in the Anacostia River for a great cause. I helped launch the first CharityWorks bass fishing tournament, which benefits The Fishing School in Northeast. Best of all, the event helped highlight our ongoing efforts to make the Anacostia River the most spectacular river in the region.

CharityWorks—an all-volunteer organization with 125 members that was founded in 1999—ran the event, which was a tremendous success. CharityWorks members contribute both manpower and funds to qualified nonprofit organizations in our region that make a significant impact on the area's most urgent needs. The fishing tournament, along with a gala in September, will provide the resources needed for the Fishing School to turn a dream into a reality.

At the tournament, participants competed for the grand prize: a new H-2 Hummer and \$5,000. John Eger of ManTech International won the tournament. Eger managed to catch five fish whose total weight exceeded 10 pounds. The event raised \$225,000 for the Fishing School.

The Fishing School is a unique after-school family and child support center offering a safe haven, intervention and education to inner-city children and youth. This is a very important program for the District of Columbia. When we start early with our young people, we plant the seeds for the future. And partnerships with CharityWorks and the Fishing School underscore that government can't do it alone. It takes all of us.

Since its inception, CharityWorks has raised more than \$2 million for local metropolitan charities involved in education, health and poverty reduction. I'm proud of their efforts.

Holding the tournament on the Anacostia River underscored my vision for a restored Anacostia River. A few years ago, I began my campaign for Mayor on the banks of the Anacostia. The river is one of our city's most undervalued natural resources—and it must be reconnected to the city that rests upon its shores.

Events such as the CharityWorks fishing tournament help highlight the river's beauty.



Mayor's Week In Review

The weeks of August 11 and August 18 were very productive here at the John A. Wilson Building and elsewhere in the District. Below you'll find a brief overview of some of the activities I took part in:

- **On August 12**, I joined public safety officials and citizens in Ward 7 for a ceremony honoring two transgendered teens slain last August.
- **On August 12**, I participated in a community forum on violence and public safety.
- **On August 15**, I appeared on the Kojo Nnamdi show on WAMU 88.5 FM.
- **On August 15**, I delivered brief remarks to the Blues Alley Music Society's Annual End of the Summer Big Band Performance, which included a group of summer youth program participants.
- **On August 16**, I joined community members and organizers of the 13th Annual Stone Soul Picnic at RFK Stadium in Southeast.
- **On August 18**, I appeared as a guest on Paul Berry's radio show, on WTNT Radio, 570 AM.
- **On August 18**, I visited Capitol Hill Towers in Northeast to meet and greet some of the city's senior citizens.
- **On August 22**, I visited the set of "The District," a television program set in Washington, D.C. that was filming here during that week.
- **On August 22**, I appeared on Channel 9's Morning News show.
- **On August 22**, I joined citizens and community leaders at the 45th Anniversary Celebration of Ben's Chili Bowl in Northwest.

District Activities



Mayor Williams displays proclamation declaring August 22 "Ben's Chili Bowl Day" in the District.



Mayor Williams speaks with actor Craig T. Nelson on the set of the television show "The District."

Community News

- [Community Invited to Plan Future of H Street Corridor](#)
- [Free Workshop for Historic Preservation Fund Applicants](#)
- [DC Moves Ahead with Convention Center Headquarters Hotel](#)

[View all News Releases](#)



Upcoming Events

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 8/30 | 11th and Lamont Streets Community Health Fair and Block Party
12 - 8 pm
3300 Block of 11th Street, NW |
| 9/4 | Elderfest 2003
10 am - 3 pm
Between 13th and 14th Streets on Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Freedom Plaza |
| 9/6-
9/7 | NCNW 18th Annual Black Family Reunion Celebration
Washington Monument Grounds
For more information, call (202) 737-0120

Adams Morgan Festival 2003
12 - 6 pm
18th Street, NW between Columbia Road and Florida Avenue
For more information, call (202) 321-0938 |
| 9/9-
9/11 | International Child Art Festival
The National Mall between 7th and 12th Streets, NW
For more information, call (202) 530-1000 |

View the [Mayor's daily schedule](#)

